

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
USCINCEUR

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, LY
SUBJECT: QADHAFI CALLS FOR ARAB UNITY TO FACE ISRAEL ON
OCCASION OF BRITISH EVACUATION DAY

SUMMARY. BRITISH EVACUATION DAY, MARCH 28, IS ONE OF THREE
ANTI-FOREIGN HOLIDAYS CELEBRATED BY LIBYA (OTHER TWO ARE
AMERICAN AND ITALIAN EVACUATION DAYS). PURPOSE IS TO
COMMEMORATE EVICTION OF FOREIGNERS FROM LIBYA AND PROVIDE
OCCASION FOR SPEECH BY LIBYAN LEADER QADHAFI. THIS YEAR'S
SPEECH GIVEN AT TOBRUK (FORMER BRITISH BASE) WAS SURPRISINGLY
BRIEF AND FOCUSED ON NEED FOR ARAB UNITY TO FACE ISRAELIS
PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF RECENT INCURSION INTO SOUTHERN
LEBANON. MAJOR POINT WAS OFFER TO SEND LIBYAN ARMED
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FORCES COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BRIGADIER ABU BAKR YUNIS JABER
TO CAIRO TO MEET WITH COUNTERPART IN ORDER TO FORMULATE
JOINT PLANS TO FIGHT ISRAEL. END SUMMARY.

1. IN AN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY BRIEF (45 MINUTES) SPEECH
IN TOBRUK ON MARCH 28, LIBYAN LEADER COLONEL MU'AMMAR
AL-QADHAFI MADE HIS ANNUAL BRITISH EVACUATION DAY COMMENTS

TO AN ASSEMBLAGE OF GOVERNMENT MINISTERS, KEY MILITARY OFFICERS, DIPLOMATS AND JOYFUL MASSES. QADHAFI QUICKLY SKETCHED THE HISTORY OF THE THREE-POWER AGGRESSION AGAINST EGYPTIAN SINAI IN 1956 AND EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT ABD-AL-NASIR'S HEROIC DEFENSE. QADHAFI STATED THAT THE RENAMING OF THE FORMER BRITISH (AL-ADAM) AIRBASE NEAR TOBRUK (CITE OF THE CELEBRATION) HAD BEEN MEANT TO HONOR ABD-AL-NASIR AS A PERMANENT SYMBOL OF THE ARAB REVOLUTION AND OF ARAB UNITY. SINCE ITS RENAMING, HE CLAIMED THAT THE BASE HAD STOOD AS A SYMBOL OF THE FIGHT FOR THE ARAB CAUSE, EVEN WHEN FORCED TO DEFEND AGAINST EGYPTIAN ATTACK.

2. QADHAFI SAID THAT THE ONLY TRUE ARAB WAR WAS THE ONE AGAINST THE ZIONIST ENEMY TO LIBERATE OCCUPIED ARAB LANDS. HE CONDEMNED ALL WARS BETWEEN BROTHERLY ARABS AND CALLED THE EGYPTIAN ATTACK ON LIBYA IN SUMMER 1977 A TREASONOUS ACT, WHICH ONLY AIDED THE ZIONIST ENEMY. HE CONTENDED THAT IT HAD BEEN THE US-INSPIRED EGYPTIAN ATTACK ON LIBYA THAT HAD DISTRACTED A KEY CONFRONTATION STATE AND ULTIMATELY PERMITTED THE ZIONIST INVASION AND OCCUPATION OF SOUTHERN LEBANON. QADHAFI RUEFULLY REFERRED TO THE ACCUMULATED MILITARY MIGHT OF THE ARAB WORLD (1 MILLION SOLDIERS, 5,000 TANKS AND 1,000 AIRPLANES) WHICH WAS STILL INCAPABLE OF DEFENDING ITSELF AGAINST THE AGGRESSION OF A NATION OF 2 MILLION. QADHAFI REMINDED HIS LISTENERS OF WHAT HE CALLED THE IMPERIALIST EXPANSIONIST POLICY OF ISRAEL, WHICH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COVETED A NATION "FROM THE EUPHRATES TO THE NILE."

3. THE MAIN THRUST OF QADHAFI'S REMARKS CAME NEAR THE END, WHEREIN HE ANNOUNCED HIS OFFER TO SEND LIBYAN COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BRIGADIER ABU BAKR YUNIS TO MEET WITH THE EGYPTIAN COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF (UNNAMED) TO DISCUSS THE UNIFICATION OF THE TWO ARMIES TO FIGHT ISRAEL. QADHAFI SAID THAT ALL PAST PROBLEMS WITH EGYPT COULD BE FORGOTTEN AS LONG AS THE EGYPTIANS COULD ACCEPT THE "ONE TRUE MEETING FOR ALL ARABS," WHICH WOULD BE TO ARRANGE THE COORDINATION OF EFFORTS TO FIGHT THE ZIONIST ENEMY AND LIBERATE OCCUPIED ARAB LANDS, STARTING WITH SINAI. REFERRING INDIRECTLY TO THE ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE CURRENTLY BEING HELD IN CAIRO, QADHAFI STATED THAT ALL "OTHER ARAB MEETINGS" WOULD BE REJECTED AS TREASONOUS ACTS. HE FURTHER PLEDGED TO OPEN LIBYA AND ITS WEALTH TO ALL ARABS WHO SINCERELY WISHED TO FIGHT ISRAEL. HE SAID HE WOULD EVEN MAKE THE VITAL LIBYAN OIL RESOURCES A STRATEGIC RESERVE FOR THE USE OF EGYPT AND OTHER ARAB NATIONS PREPARED TO FIGHT.

4. QADHAFI'S SPEECH WAS FOLLOWED BY AN OVERFLIGHT OF SOVIET-MADE AIRCRAFT, A PARADE OF SMALL GROUPS OF

"REPRESENTATIVE UNITS" FROM THE LIBYAN ARMED FORCES AND AN AIRBORNE DROP USING LIBYAN C-130 AIRCRAFT.

5. THIS IS NOT FIRST TIME QADHAFI HAS OFFERED LIBYAN SUPPORT TO ARAB STATES READY TO FIGHT ISRAEL. OFFER TO SEND HIS MILITARY COMMANDER TO CONSULT WITH EGYPTIAN COUNTERPART NO DOUBT INTENDED TO EMBARRASS SADAT AND ENCOURAGE DISSIDENCE IN EGYPT.
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